



Kentucky

Career and Technical Education

Industry and Education Partnerships
Moving Students Forward

Welding Tournament Allows
State's Top Welders to Build a Future

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Answering the Relevance, Rigor
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Making the Case for College
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Business Education: Creating
Next Generation of CEOs

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Business Education: Creating the Next Generation of CEO's

Today's Business Education classes are nothing like the old typing and shorthand courses of a generation ago. One example of that is the Office Systems Technology (OST) program area which consists of such courses as Computer and Technology Applications, Medical Office Procedures and Web Design just to name a few. These programs can benefit all students no matter which career pathway they have chosen.

Marissa Conway is one of the three OST instructors at the Montgomery County Area Technology Center (ATC), a school that has helped create opportunities for students in that program area through dual credit agreements, cooperative education or by participating in the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) student organization.

She said one thing that is helpful is to have students learn many of the basic computer/technology skills at a younger age which sets the stage for more advanced curriculum at the high school level.

"Many counties across the state have moved their basic computer literacy skills down to the middle school level giving us the opportunity to really advance what we are teaching here," she said.



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Conway added in doing that students have a better chance of moving on to college, taking full advantage of the dual credit agreements the school has in place.

She also said that thanks to the support of the local school district in the technology area, this type of learning has credence and allows students to receive a needed credit toward their high school diploma, earning it at the ATC.

“One thing that makes me passionate about what we do here is preparing students to walk out with more than just a high school diploma. Whatever postsecondary option they choose, students are definitely ready to go to work or college with the skills we have been able to teach them,” Conway said. “Traditional business courses such as Business Management and Business Communications are still offered in part of many OST programs. However, the 21st century approach to business education must include skills in technology as well as soft skills needed for communication via the web and social media facets. It is a critical component of a successful OST department for instructors to remain current with ever changing trends in business education.”

Being college and career ready is at the center of most educational endeavors these days, and Conway made a valid point when it came to fulfilling the mission. She said that with so many colleges now offering online courses and classes at night, her students were equipped with the skills to work in most any office setting during the day while working toward their college degrees in an alternate manner.

Montgomery Co. ATC junior student Prem Patel has always liked computer design, so his classes in computer applications and web design were natural fits for him. On the advice of his teachers, he also took a Photoshop and Flash course to enable his websites in the Web Design course to look even more professional. Patel plans to use the programs to help prepare for college where he will study computer engineering.



The Montgomery Co. ATC
Business teaching team.

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Marissa Conway
OST Instructor,
Montgomery Co. ATC

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Angela Barker and Ronda Bowles complete the OST teaching team at the school, and both emphasize the fact that what students are learning through the OST program at the ATC is something they can use in their real world experiences.

"It's extremely important for our students simply from the aspect that these are real-life skills they can take directly out of our school into the workforce and get a job," said Barker. "We look at all aspects, being career ready as well as being college ready. We're very fortunate that we do get a lot of the students that are on track to go to college, and we can prepare them for both things."

Barker added that being able to do both is a great position to be in and cited the many dual credit agreements the school has with various colleges in the area, some for nearly 10 years. "At the beginning of their college career, students could easily walk in with four credits," she said.

Not only do students have the opportunity to receive dual credit, they can also receive industry certifications. In fact, Montgomery County ATC has been an official testing center for the Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) certification for a number of years. MOUS is the premier Microsoft desktop certification recognized as the standard for demonstrating desktop skills.

"We were one of the very first testing centers that came on board in the state of Kentucky," Barker said.

Just last fall the school started offering testing for the IC3 certification as a way to test students on a wider variety of computer-based skills.

IC3 or Internet and Computing Core Certification is a program designed to recognize a student's digital literacy skills associated with basic computer and Internet use. With an IC3 or MOUS credential, students are able to prove their abilities to potential employers with a nationally-recognized certification.



Kentucky FBLA President Abby Witt, of Estill County recently testified before the House Education Committee as part of the annual Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) Day. Witt told the committee how important her experience in Career and Technical Education has been to her and how important it is to other students, as well.

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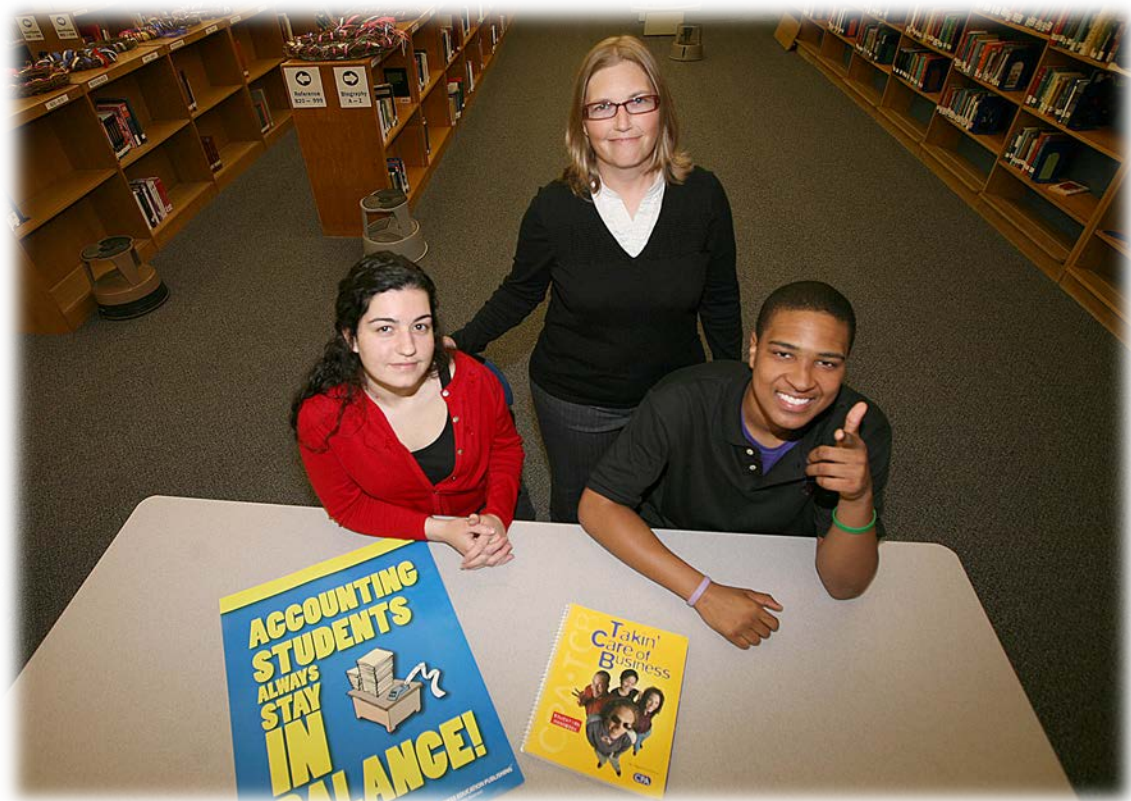
The school's business program utilizes a business advisory board to stay abreast of what community businesses needs are and to ensure the school is providing the right programs to meet those needs which in turn helps students to become a better educated future workforce.

Another important component of the business programs is FBLA. Bowles said part of what students need to know is related to leadership skills and how they will conduct themselves in college or in the workplace. That is where FBLA plays such a vital role. Through the many leadership competitions offered, students are extending their education in a way that only a student organization can provide.

"This is really helping students. We have had several students, state and regional officers compete at the national level over the years," she said. "But even if they don't compete on the national level, there is still something about being a part of an organization that you know needs you and you are making a difference, that will increase your self esteem."

Bowles added that there are so many opportunities for students; they just need the tools to get them there and where to find them.

Today's business programs, along with a strong organization, are providing those tools as the next generation of business professionals get their start in programs like the ones at Montgomery County ATC and at the high school level throughout the state.



Welding Tournament Allows State's Top Welders to Build a Future

While it might not appear to be the most glamorous of jobs, welding remains one of the most necessary of the skills trades and one of the most popular Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes in Kentucky.

But it's not for everyone. Welding is part skill, part art and all important to the endless number of products and processes on which it is used.

For those who are the best among high school welders, a competition exists to reward them with scholarship money and prizes for the intense training needed to become an industry-certified welder.

The Central Kentucky Welding Classic (CKWC) brings together high school welding students who represent the top three in their respective classes. The competition is in its sixth year and is operated under the joint effort of welding instructors Randy Shewmaker and Chris King.

Shewmaker first held the competition at Franklin County Career and Technical Center where he is a teacher. He said the event started with just a handful of schools but has grown immensely with the involvement of area industries and the state's technical education sector.

The competition is indicative of the need for qualified welders throughout the country, emphasized Shewmaker. "I've got employers e-mailing me daily or weekly just because the demand is so high," he said.

Shewmaker added that he gets a diverse group of students involved in the program including many females and honor students.

But for those staying in the welding industry, Shewmaker said the opportunities are great and lucrative. He estimates that 95 percent of his students are staying in the field where there are opportunities for postsecondary training, as well.

In fact, one of the biggest draws for the welding competition is the amount of scholarship money available to winners.



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Ohio Technical College in Cleveland has long been supportive of students involved in the skills trades and offered \$85,000 worth of scholarship money just for the latest competition.

Pat Weber, the school's Kentucky representative, said students should take advantage of the money because there will be a huge demand for welders in the coming decade.

"There's a serious need. It's estimated that over the next ten years there's going to be a need for over 250,000 welders," he said. The scholarship money is divided between the top five finishers as well as top winning teams.

Prizes are also offered at Tulsa Welding School, the number one welding school in the country, and one of the top sponsors at the competition.

Josh Jones, an admissions representative for Tulsa, said getting that postsecondary training is essential in the world of welding.

"We teach the student an all around value of welding; everything they need to know about it. The industry looks at us very closely, our job rate and career services we have been building," he said. "Students come into our school and they get the training they need for the 'real-life' scenarios that they will be in, and employers are able to hire these students without really further training; they are ready to go make money."

Jones added that it takes a special person and a very highly-trained person to do a proper job in the welding field.



Judging the welders.

According to the American Welding Society, More than 50 percent of U.S. products require welding.

Welding Tournament Allows State's Top Welders to Build a Future

The Welding Classic has grown so much so that it was moved to the Hughes Jones Harrodsburg Area Technology Center where there is a larger welding lab to accommodate the large number of entries.

Chris King is the instructor there. He said there is an ever increasing demand for skilled welders, not only in Kentucky but across the U.S. This makes the way this competition is run ideal for a student to experience a work environment.

"The CKWC welding competition is based on 'real world' scenarios and challenges the student's abilities on multiple aspects of the welding field. The simple preparation for this event builds the students ability to work under pressure, complete a multi-stage task with accuracy, and have a basic understanding of three different welding processes, an understanding of cutting processes, and blueprint reading," he said.

King added that the students need to be motivated to successfully pursue welding as a career.

"It takes hours of constant practice to become a competent welder and years of experience to master welding. The student has to be willing to work both in the class room and in the lab to have the correct understanding of the different types of welding. The student must be patient. An over-eager student that expects to master the field in a short amount of time usually ends up frustrated," King said.

In addition to the welding skills needed, King noted that students pursuing a welding career also need to have a basic understanding of math, science, reading, communication and locating information. All of these, in conjunction with welding skills, are core elements to becoming a successful welder, he said.

The latest Classic was held last November when welders from Rockcastle County Area Technology Center (ATC) finished first in the team competition followed by the Franklin County Career and Technical Center and the Nelson County ATC.

Individually, Jon Harrison of Rockcastle County finished in first place, Brandon Hartman of Harrodsburg placed second and Kaleb Miller of Nelson County rounded out the top three.

In addition to the scholarship money offered by Ohio Tech and sponsorship by the Tulsa Welding School, Hobart Corporation, Lincoln Electric, Weld Quip. and Scott Gross Welding Company also served as co-sponsors for the event.

"The CKWC welding competition is based on 'real world' scenarios and challenges the student's abilities on multiple aspects of the welding field."

**Chris West
Welding Instructor,
Hughes Jones
Harrodsburg ATC**

CKWC Winners

1st Place: Rockcastle County ATC

2nd Place: Franklin County CTC

3rd Place: Nelson County ATC

Industry and Education Partnerships

Moving Students Forward

The connection between the business and industry sector and the education sector is key to the success of both' and Carroll County is a prime example of a community that realizes the value of those connections with businesses that have long been supportive of the educational system there.

Just recently, the Dow Corning Corp. in Carrollton made a \$19,337 donation to the Carroll County Area Technology Center (CCATC) to help train students in the school's Applied Process Technology (APT) program.

The class helps prepare students for college and careers in various technical sectors including the engineering technician field, especially as it relates to chemical engineering.

The money will be used primarily to purchase new equipment for the program which was established in 1998, known then as the Industrial Chemical Technology class. Dow Corning was instrumental at that time as well in providing seed money to start the one-of-a-kind classroom experience along with two other programs at CCATC. Once again the company is stepping up, as technology has changed and the need to replace long-time workers who are getting ready to retire has risen according to school principal Crystal Raisor.

"The program's name change reflects the way technology has changed over the last two decades and our ability as a career- and technology-based school system to also make adjustments to keep up with those advances," she said. "We are very grateful to companies like Dow Corning that have been vital partners over the years in our efforts to create a solid, well-trained future workforce for those industries in our communities. As one workforce readies for retirement, it is our goal to help students learn what is necessary to take over those positions."

Raisor added that since 1998, Dow Corning has contributed more than \$150,000 to the Carroll County Training Consortium, which began through a federal School-to-Work grant. The grant has sustained a critical, long-time funding source, contributed to by an array of local businesses and industries for the school's training efforts and numerous student scholarships.

Jill Ralston, an industry training and development specialist with the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education, which administers CCTC and 52 other ATCs across the state, said this type of donation is vital to the success of programs at the school, which, in turn, create a vital workforce for the local businesses and industries.



Carroll Co. ATC Principal Crystal Raisor, second from left, receives a check from Jebon Hardesty, HR Manager-Carrollton Site. Also pictured are Jill Ralston, left, OCTE business and industry specialist and Donna Burns with the University of Louisville working on special projects with Dow Corning.

Industry and Education Partnerships

Moving Students Forward

“Local industries are true partners in career and technical education here in Carrollton and across the state and nation. It’s important to recognize their efforts as such and understand that many students could not reach the next level of college and career readiness without them,” Ralston said. “Dow Corning has been instrumental in providing the necessary educational tools needed to develop not only a future workforce for their facility but for a lifelong career for students no matter where they may go.”

Jebon Hardesty, human resources manager for Dow Corning in Carrollton, said making an investment in education is important for many reasons.

“We want to be a good corporate citizen in the local community, but also, our lifeblood is our employee base and I think having that workforce developed is going to ensure our ongoing success here in Carrollton, as a company,” he said.

Hardesty added that the earlier students can make a decision around the career path they want to pursue, the better it will be for them.

Larry Tarvestad, site manager at the Carrollton facility, said the company has had local high school students tour the plant, something they don’t normally get to do and something they should do to make an informed decision about a career path.

“If you don’t see it, you won’t get a chance to understand it,” he said. With the addition of new equipment for the APT class, students now will have an opportunity to “see it” in a way not available before; an advantage for them and for local businesses that hope to hire them one day.

Dale Winkler, executive director of Kentucky Career and Technical Education, oversees the day-to-day operations of the state’s secondary CTE operations. He said business and industry partnerships have always been and will remain a vital component in the success of CTE programs and schools throughout the Commonwealth.

“There is a distinctive connection between our high school CTE programs and the local businesses and industries that will depend on the students in those programs to one day become employees,” he said. “It is critical to both schools and their business partners to support each other as workforce and education needs change.”



AdvancED Accreditation: Answering the Relevance, Rigor and Relationship Question

Five years ago, the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) was recommended for district-wide accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) – Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI), now divisions of AdvancED.

That agency is the world's largest education community which delivers high-quality school improvement and accreditation services to more than 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 69 countries that educate more than 15 million students.

OCTE became the first technical education district in the country to obtain this honor placing Kentucky Career and Technical Education (CTE) on a new level of educational attainment and recognition. In September 2011, OCTE was reassessed by a team of educators and administrators assembled by the AdvancED organization and once again has been recommended for accreditation.

The announcement was made by the AdvancED quality assurance review team's leader Dr. Mike Griffin whose group traveled throughout the state visiting schools and seeing firsthand the accomplishments of the state's 53 Area Technology Centers.

Griffin pointed out that the students ultimately are the most important factor when it comes to assessing the system and what it does for those students. He also said that in order for a system to meet the rigorous requirements to be AdvancED certified it must demonstrate a commitment to systemic, systematic and sustainable improvement.

"You practice this religiously through your program assessment process and this is about as good a system as we have seen," Griffin said.

He added that of all the AdvancED standards requirements needed to receive accreditation, the KY Tech system had met and exceeded those standards.



AdvancED Accreditation: Answering the Relevance, Rigor and Relationship Question

Wayne King, the OCTE branch manager who coordinates program assessment process and manages the AdvanceEd, SACS-CASI school improvement and district accreditation process, said receiving the accreditation is advantageous to the system in a couple of ways.

“KY Tech’s accreditation from AdvancED provides two major advantages for our system. The first advantage allows for a better seamless transition with postsecondary education through articulation and dual credit agreements,” he said.

“The second advantage comes through the process of accreditation with the focus on continuous improvement. KY Tech, through this process, becomes more focused on ensuring continuous growth with a focus on student improvement.”



teachers or our community members,” he said. “The presence of CTE in this state is critical to the overall educational picture of the students we serve. I think this kind of recognition, essentially by our peers, lets us know we are on the right path in Kentucky.”



The process included collecting data from a broad array of resources including over 380 staff, students, administrators and legislators to gather the necessary information that led to re-accreditation.

Dr. Dale Winkler, executive director of Kentucky CTE, said the procedure for reaching these accreditation milestones began more than seven years ago and is a testament to the quality of the state’s technical education systems and the continuous improvement process it has in place.

“This accreditation speaks to the process by which our CTE partners have worked to not only make this system better but make it sustainable and of great value to our stakeholders be they students,

Making the Case for College and Career Coaches

College and career readiness is an initiative getting a lot of attention of late as nearly every state tries to reduce college remediation rates and increase college completion rates.

Kentucky is no different having passed legislation in 2009 (Senate Bill 1) seeking to do just that.

But, to borrow a sports analogy, every good team must have a good coach and in the game of education, that means many coaches.

Thanks to the help of an AmeriCorps grant, Kentucky is in the second year of utilizing more than 40 “coaches” around the state that are helping countless students prepare themselves for their next step of education once they graduate from high school.

Gayle Hilleke, executive director of Kentucky Campus Compact, the agency that administered the grant, has overseen the use of the Kentucky college and career (KCC) coaches through three partnering agencies in the state. She said the program is modeled after the national Near Peer Mentoring program that brings recent college graduates together with high school students in order to help them make that transition from high school to college.

The Kentucky program, which places 40 KCC coaches around the state, has been made possible by a partnership with the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), and the Berea GEAR UP program. The program is funded from the federal agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) through the state agency, the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS).



Shelby Co. ATC Career Coach Pam Lang helps students at the school find the college or career path that is best for them.

Making the Case for College and Career Coaches

In the course of getting the project started, Hilleke realized a conversation needed to happen with career and technical education which led her to OCTE's Mary Stratton, an area supervisor overseeing operations at 17 of the 53 schools that make up the agency.

Stratton said there are scores of students enrolled in CTE programs that have the ability to move up to the next level of education and that the KCC program has become a necessary component in getting students to that level.

"Many of our students have not been identified as college prep, but they are as capable as anyone else," Stratton said. "They are just a different type of learner and are vital in meeting our college-and career-readiness goals. They just need someone to sit down one-on-one with them and get them to that first or second step."

The program is designed to work with a core group of students considered to be "not college bound." Seth Blakeslee, KCC coach at Waggener High School in Louisville and former coach at Nelson County ATC, has worked the last two years with those types of students and said without someone to push them, a lot of them will take the easiest option, which does not include postsecondary education.

"I firmly believe that this program is critical for the postsecondary success of Kentucky students, especially at schools like Area Technology Centers. For many students, the Kentucky College Coach is the main resource and the only available one for information and help regarding postsecondary education" he said. "Availability to students is my first priority as a college coach."

"Many of our students have not been identified as college prep but they are as capable as anyone else. They are just a different type of learner and are vital in meeting our college-and career-readiness goals."

Mary Stratton
OCTE Area Supervisor



Making the Case for College and Career Coaches

Blakeslee added that he works with students and their parents.

Partnerships have proven to be a vital component of the KCC program, and OCTE has been unique in its involvement. Hilleke pointed out that this may be the only technical education system in the country to participate in such a program.

The results are important. Even though it is still being collected, data shows the program has been a success so far.

“Even after the first year, we know that it is a powerful program. So our hope is that we will have a coach in every ATC and high school in Kentucky,” Hilleke said. “Some of the things we’ve found were that ACT scores were improved and a higher percentage of high school students graduated. The most significant outcome was the number of high school seniors who continued on to college. The core students involved in the KCC program went to college at a rate nine percent greater than the non-core students at the same schools. I think that schools that experience it, and have a really good coach, see what a dramatic difference it can make for their students, and I think as they are economically able they would support it.”

Blakeslee also has seen firsthand how successful the program has been. “Of my 15 current seniors, 14 have applied to college. Last year, at Nelson County ATC, I had over 70 percent of my core seniors attending some form of postsecondary education, including two-year colleges, four-year universities and apprenticeships,” he said.

Hilleke noted that as more data is collected, it will continue to fortify how valuable the program is and how important it is to fund it even in tough economic times.

She said the first year saw the largest grant of \$907,000 but the second year fell to \$146,000 and it has been the partners’ contributions of match money that has kept the program going.

Next year looks to be a challenge; if additional funds aren’t found, some schools could lose the KCC coach even though it has been critical to the advancement of participating high school students.

Stratton said OCTE has applied for an additional AmeriCorps grant to keep the program alive in that agency. She also emphasized that private funding from corporations would make a huge difference in sustaining the program.

“The funding keeps getting cut on the federal level. But the bang for the buck, when it comes to the results of this program, has shown it is tremendous,” she said.



Director's Notes

Greetings CTE Champions!

You are probably familiar with the many reports over the past couple of years about the shortage of skilled workers in this country. Many of the nation's largest employers are struggling to find employees who have the academic, technical, and employability skills needed to be successful on the job. A recent article in ACTE's monthly publication *Techniques* (December 2011) states, "One of the U.S. Department of Labor's proposed solutions to this dilemma is to increase industry-recognized stackable credentials with a clearly defined system of competencies linked to employment opportunities and advancement."

The certificates being offered through Kentucky's career and technical education programs are providing students with the skills needed to be successful in the workplace or in further education. A major emphasis has been placed on the need for students to demonstrate both academic and technical skills to be successful, and Kentucky's new accountability model for college and career readiness has placed a major emphasis on CTE. Students can demonstrate that they are career ready by completing a sequence of four courses within a CTE program area and earning a Kentucky Occupational Skills Standard Certificate or industry-recognized certification. To prove that they have the academic skills needed to succeed in the workplace students can take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) or WorkKeys assessments. Students that are successful on the WorkKeys assessment receive a National Career Readiness Certificate.

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is also featured in the recent *Techniques* magazine. In one article it states, "Since 2008, with severe competition for jobs in the United States, the NCRC has gained support among employers and job seekers as an efficient, inexpensive and reliable credential that quickly certifies trainability and employability." In Kentucky, many employers are using the NCRC as a hiring filter when working with local Workforce Investment Board offices. The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board recently implemented the Work Ready Communities initiative in which one criteria for obtaining community certification takes into consideration the percentage of working age (18-64) adults that hold the NCRC. Students that receive this certificate while in high school have an advantage over other job candidates that do not hold the certificate.

The Office of Career and Technical Education will continue to develop curriculum and assessments that are based on industry standards and align with the academic common core as a means of preparing all students for college and a career. The focus will be on partnering with Kentucky's leading industries to ensure students can pursue programs of study that offer stackable credentials needed for employment or future education. Best wishes to all CTE instructors in Kentucky as you implement programs of study that are preparing the future workforce.

Sincerely,
Dale Winkler
Executive Director – Career and Technical Education